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IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Previously Amended) An exhaust system converter, comprising:
a catalyst;
a first endplate positioned adjacent to a first end portion of said catalyst, said first endplate defining a first extreme end of said converter and comprising a first endplate support mechanism extending perpendicularly therefrom toward said catalyst;
a mat support substantially covering said catalyst and at least a portion of said first endplate support mechanism, wherein said first endplate support mechanism is disposed between said mat support and said catalyst; and
a shell having a diameter greater than that of said first endplate, wherein said shell is disposed around said catalyst and said mat support, and is disposed around and in intimate contact with at least a portion of said first endplate.
2. (Previously Amended) The exhaust system converter of claim 1, wherein said first endplate support mechanism is positioned around said first end portion of said catalyst.
3. (Original) The exhaust system converter of claim 2, wherein said first endplate support mechanism is in the form of an annular ring.
4. (Previously Amended) The exhaust system converter of claim 3, wherein said annular ring is welded to said first endplate.
5. (Original) The exhaust system converter of claim 3, wherein said mat support substantially covers said catalyst and said annular ring.
6. (Previously Amended) The exhaust system converter of claim 1, further comprising a second endplate, positioned adjacent to an opposite, second end portion of said catalyst, wherein said shell is disposed around and in intimate contact with said second endplate.

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7. (Original) The exhaust system converter of claim 6, wherein said second endplate incorporates a second endplate support mechanism, and wherein said second endplate support mechanism is positioned around a second annular end portion of said catalyst.

8. (Original) The exhaust system converter of claim 7, wherein said second endplate support mechanism is in the form of an annular ring.

9. (Previously Amended) The exhaust system converter of claim 8, wherein said annular ring is welded to said second endplate.

10. (Previously Amended) The exhaust system converter of claim 8, wherein said mat support substantially covers said catalyst and said annular ring.

11. (Original) The exhaust system converter of claim 1, wherein said catalyst comprises a three-way catalyst.

12. (Previously Amended) The exhaust system converter of claim 1, wherein said catalyst comprises an oxidation catalyst.

13. (Cancelled)

14. (Previously Amended) The exhaust system converter of claim 1, said shell is disposed around and in intimate contact with an entire periphery of said first endplate.

15-22 (Cancelled)

23. (Previously Presented) The exhaust system converter of claim 1, wherein said mat support extends beyond a face of said catalyst.

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24. (Previously Amended) An exhaust system converter, comprising:

a catalyst;

a first endplate, positioned adjacent to a first end portion of said catalyst, said first endplate defining a first extreme end of said converter and comprising a first endplate support mechanism extending perpendicularly therefrom;

a second endplate, positioned adjacent to a second end portion of said catalyst, said second endplate defining a second extreme end of said converter and comprising a second endplate support mechanism extending perpendicularly therefrom toward said catalyst;

a mat support substantially covering said catalyst, said mat support extending beyond a face of the catalyst over at least a portion of said first endplate support mechanism, wherein said first endplate support mechanism is disposed between said mat support and said catalyst; and

a shell disposed around said catalyst and said mat support, and is disposed around and in intimate contact with at least a portion of said first endplate and said second end plate.

25. (Previously Amended) The exhaust system converter of claim 24, wherein said first endplate support mechanism comprises a first annular ring extending from the first endplate and said second endplate support mechanism comprises a second annular ring extending from a second endplate.

26. (Previously Presented) The exhaust system converter of claim 25, wherein said mat support substantially covers said first annular ring and said second annular ring.

27. (Previously Presented) The exhaust system converter of claim 25, wherein said shell extends from a periphery of said first endplate main portion to a periphery of said second endplate main portion.

28. (Previously Presented) The exhaust system converter of claim 27, wherein said shell extends from about halfway across said periphery of said first endplate to about halfway across said periphery of said second endplate.

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29. (Previously Presented) The exhaust system converter of Claim 1, wherein said first endplate is disposed in spaced relation to said first end portion.

30. (Previously Presented) The exhaust system converter of Claim 25, wherein said first endplate is disposed in spaced relation to said first end portion, and said second endplate is disposed in spaced relation to said second end portion.

31. (Previously Presented) The exhaust system converter of Claim 1, wherein said first endplate is flat.

32. (Previously Presented) The exhaust system converter of Claim 24, wherein said first endplate and said second endplate are flat.